The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and official interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in its industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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Write Your Senators And Congressmen to Repeal T-H Law

WHOLE NO. 1989 — WILLIAM GREEN, *President* — WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, MAY 24, 1949 — GEORGE MEANY, *Secretary-Treasurer* — VOL. 39, NO. 21

Scholarships Given by Union Awarded Members' Children

Anne G. Schreiner and Bertil L. Hanson receive congratulations from William L. McFetridge, president of the Building Service Employees International Union, for winning scholarship awards provided by the Chicago Flat Janitors Union, a BSEIU affiliate, and given annually to children of union members.

By DAN SMYTH
Chicago Correspondent for AFL News Service

Chicago.—For Anne G. Schreiner and Bertil Lennart Hanson, the door to a higher education is open. The AFL's Chicago Flat Janitors Union, Local No. 1, is working their way through college.

They are the 1949 winners of "opportunity scholarship awards" presented annually to children of members of the local, an affiliate of the Building Service Employees' International Union.

Bertil is the son of Birger Hanson, a member of the flat janitors' union since 1928. Anne's father, John Schreiner, has been a member since 1924.

The scholarships were begun a year ago. In his original announcement, William L. McFetridge, president of the union, said:

"It has long been a fundamental principle of American democracy that every boy and girl should have the opportunity for an education commensurate with his abilities, regardless of the financial status of his parents.

"Through these scholarships, a maximum of eight of our most talented sons and daughters every year will be given an opportunity for the finest education to be had anywhere."

Each scholarship covers full tuition up to $750 a year in any undergraduate school of Northwestern University. The funds are to be awarded on a competitive basis. Two scholarships will be offered for each school year until a total of eight awards have been made. Then a total of eight awards will be available every year, including renewals.

Eligible to apply is any high school senior or graduate who is the child of a member in good standing five years or more in the flat janitors' union. Children of officers of the union are not eligible, however.

The union refers all applicants to Northwestern University, which selects the winners, on the basis of scholastic record, character, personality and promise of future leadership. To meet the university's qualifications for entrance an applicant should rank in the upper fourth of his high school class.

If the scholarship student maintains a satisfactory record at Northwestern, the union intends to finance a complete four-year education for those who continue to merit such help. Northwestern offers a varied curriculum. A janitor's son, or daughter, may train there to be an accountant, a teacher, a journalist, a musician, an engineer, or prepare himself for medical or legal training. Or he may use the education to better equip himself to follow the trade of his father, which is not a bad one under union conditions in Chicago.

ILO Conclave to Plan Slave Labor Probe; AFL's Successful Anti-'Red' Drive Hailed

By ARNOLD BEICHMAN
New York Correspondent for AFL News Service

New York.—The major task of the International Labor Organization conference in Geneva starting June 8 will be to institute a commission to study the extent of slave labor in the Soviet Union, according to George Delaney, U. S. worker's delegate to the ILO.

Mr. Delaney, who is also international representative of the AFL, in a shipboard interview before his departure for Europe, said that the ILO commission, when set up, would also take up the question of interference of trade union rights in Venezuela and Peru.

A major event is expected to take place the first thereof a permanent conference setting up a new free democratic trade union international organization will get underway.

The AFL international representative disclosed that the work of the AFL and spotlight that of Serafino Romualdi, AFL Latin-American representative, had resulted in major defeats of Communist penetration into the labor movement in Central and South America.

"We witnessed the reversal of the entire situation from what it was like in 1946," said Mr. Delaney. "At the last regular ILO conference of American States, Lombardo Toledano and his CTAL organization were influential. They dominated the ILO sessions. At the last conference, from which I have just returned, in Montevideo, Toledano didn't even show up.

"The AFL and the free unions of Latin America have been able to defeat the CTAL at every turn and to halt its influence whatsoever at the labor conferences. Additionally, the labor movement in Latin America is growing by leaps and bounds."

Mr. Delaney also disclosed that the AFL would present detailed evidence as to the extent of slave labor in the Soviet Union. He pointed to think tanks in connection with that in Geneva which he said contained testimony by 1,000 escapees from the Siberia which led the United Nations to recommend that the U.S. governing body study this question.

Council Calls For Enactment Of Thomas-Lesinski Labor Bill

AFL Council's Statement On Taft-Hartley Repealer

The Taft-Hartley Act represents the last forlorn hope of the reactionary groups in America to suppress progress and to maintain special privileges in power. It is no wonder, therefore, that they are trying so desperately to prevent its repeal by every trick and legislative maneuver available to Congressional strategists.

Their first attempt was to adopt a new bill almost identical with Taft-Hartley but bearing another name. This ruse was blocked when the House of Representatives voted to recommit the Wood bill.

Meanwhile, in the Senate, a group led by Senator Robert A. Taft has introduced another hypocritical measure to repeal the Taft-Hartley Act and substitute a so-called "compromise" which is almost as bad as the Taft-Hartley Act.

At the same time, the reactionary forces in Congress are marshalling their strength to emasculate the Thomas-Lesinski bill which is the only measure which is acceptable to organized labor and to the administration.

One of the most shocking aspects of the New Deal opposition to the Thomas-Lesinski bill is the charge that this measure does not protect the public interest in labor-management disputes.

Do the Tories and reactionaries in Congress who have fought, blocked and thwarted every constructive and progressive legislative proposal for the public welfare think they can now pose as public defenders?

Do the lobbyists for the special interests who have consistently tried to trample upon every social and economic reform of the past 10 years think they can get away with this ridiculous assertion?

Just picture Senator Taft as the champion of the people's welfare!

On the other hand, organized labor which has fought unceasingly to raise the standards of the American people, to free workers from economic slavery and to win some measure of security for the aged and unemployed, is convinced that the Thomas-Lesinski bill will safely protect the public interest in labor-management disputes.

In conference with leaders of the government, officials of the American Federation of Labor have agreed to support and speed up consideration of the Lesinski bill to provide additional safeguards. These are:

1. A provision requiring employers as well as union leaders to sign non-Communist affidavits.

2. A requirement for the filing of financial reports by unions.

3. A guarantee of free speech for employers in dealings with their workers, short of intimidation and coercion.

4. A provision giving the President power to invoke a 30 day cooling off period in any strike which in his opinion imperils the national health or safety.

5. A guarantee of "due process" in which disputes are settled by the National Labor Relations Board.

6. Finally, a provision authorizing the President of the United States to invoke and maintain the status quo in any labor dispute in any plant, mine or industry whose idleness threatens to bring about a national emergency. With these safeguards, the labor objections to the Thomas-Lesinski bill must be removed. The Executive Council hopes and anticipates that Congress will adopt the measure in the single form. Then the President will sign it, which organized labor can go."

In other action at the council meeting, AFL President William Green told reporters at a press conference that the AFL has obtained prompt support of all liberal groups, including the Americans for Democratic Action, in its great fight in 1950 to defeat Senator Robert A. Taft, R., Ohio, up for reelection in Ohio.

Mr. Green also said he had dispatched a telegram to Secretary of State Dean Acheson, on behalf of the council, urging United States aid for a group of anti-Soviet Russian refugees now living in Shanghai who have been ordered by Soviet agents.

Prior to adjournment, the council decided to hold its next regular meeting in the AFL hotel in Toronto, Canada, on August 15.

Communist Unions Plotting New Strike Wave in France

By ADRIENNE TASSLER
European Correspondent, AFL News Service

Paris.—A fresh rash of political strikes, engineered by the Communists, is anticipated here this summer.

Informed sources say the renewal will be comparable to the industrial disorders that swept France during the winter of 1947 and the fall of 1948.

The groundwork is being laid by the Communist-controlled General Confederation of Labor (CGT), which has organized a system of "united action" of workers—beginning on the plant level and ultimately reaching out to the support of the whole working class. The aim is concentrating on a variety of key industries—including steel, railways, transportation, electricity, coal mining, textiles, docks and building trades.

The Communist strike propaganda is being resisted courageously by the moderate Force Ouvriere and the Christian CFTC union organizations. But the Communists are taking advantage of the widespread resentment of workers against both the government and employers. This discontent flows from the refusal of both governments and employers to grant persistent pleas from all varieties of unions that wages be unfrozen from their present low levels. Such a move would permit unions to negotiate wage increases designed to at least partially offset the tremendous advances in the cost of living which have occurred since the unfreezing of prices last year.

Labor agitation centers on abnormal profits of industry, coupled with the government's support of high wins and wheist prices. With the work week declining and a correspondingly reduced take-home pay, workers have become increasingly bitter against the government, which they regard as the instrument of servitude to the employers.

Although the top FO and CFTC labor leaders are opposing the Communists-inspired "united action" program, it is significant that in October, 1948, those same CGT local union leaders were terrorizing FO and CFTC local union officials in their districts with their goons and sometimes (as in the coal strikes) with hand grenades, their efforts are being handicapped by the failure of the government to keep prices down. The non-Communist unions, fearing the disastrous effects of inflation, have generally refused to support the labor-front strikes for wage boosts which would result in still higher prices. However, the selfish greed of employers for higher prices and profits, coupled with the weak attitude of the government, are playing right into the hands of the Communists.

Total Nonfarm Employment Levels Off But Jobs in Manufacturing Drop Again

Washington.—Total employment in nonfarm establishments leveled off in April at 43,900,000, but manufacturing industries declined again for the 11th consecutive month, according to a report released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Seasonal gains in construction and trade employment offset the drop of 330,000 in manufacturing employment between mid-March and April, the bureau said.

In its general release on the employment situation, the BLS said the number of factory workers in April was over 2,000,000 below the all-time peak reached last June, and about 600,000 under the number employed in April, 1948. Manufacturing industries were nearly 1,000,000 below the wartime peak reached last September, and 700,000 below the number employed in April a year ago, the report declared.

Layoffs in the manufacturing industries in April were the largest for any month since the postwar low.

The April drop in factory jobs was divided between the durable and nondurable goods industries, with durable 3 industry groups reporting any increase during the month. Employment in the automotive industry increased as production of new models was expanded. A small seasonal increase in logging and sawmill activity in the West Coast was partially offset by declines in other parts of the country. The dairy, food, and beverage industries in the food group showed seasonal declines, but canning plants continued to lay off workers.

The declines in the textile industry was accompanied by a decrease in employment in blast furnaces, steel and rolling mills, while virtually all of the metal fabricating and machinery industries reported fewer new orders and fewer workers employed.

Further sharp drops in employment in April occurred in the apparel-leather group during the month. The apparel industries group totaled 74,000 workers following a drop of 100,000 since last fall. The textile group reduced employment by 60,000 in April, and now employs 220,000 fewer workers than a year ago, the report said. Manufacturing declines took place in the silk and rayon, cotton, woolen and worsted industries with plant shut-downs and short weeks the rule during April. The latter industry has dropped over 50,000 workers since the postwar peak and now employs substantially fewer workers than in 1939. Similarly, the shoe manufacturing industry cut back its employment during the month to a level below that of 1939.

Top AFL Men Agree On Some Changes; Hit Labor Foes

Cleveland.—Concluding its regular quarterly meeting here, the AFL Executive Council charged that reactionary groups in America are using every trick and subterfuge to prevent repeal of the Taft-Hartley law in order to maintain their power and maintain special privileges in power."

In a formal statement, the council called for enactment of the Thomas-Lesinski bill in place of the Taft-Hartley law and reaffirmed its willingness to accept certain changes in that measure to provide additional safeguards in the interest of the public interest in labor-management relations.

Maintaining its unequivocal stand against the use of injunctions in labor disputes, the council agreed to accept the following changes in the Lesinski bill which have been proposed by the government:

1. A provision requiring employer as well as union leaders to sign non-Communist affidavits.

2. A requirement for the filing of financial reports by unions.

3. A guarantee of free speech for employers in dealings with their workers, short of intimidation and coercion.

4. A provision giving the President power to invoke a 30 day cooling off period in any strike which in his opinion imperils the national health or safety.

5. A guarantee of "due process" in which disputes are settled by the National Labor Relations Board.

6. Finally, a provision authorizing the President of the United States to invoke and maintain the status quo in any labor dispute in any plant, mine or industry whose idleness threatens to bring about a national emergency. With these safeguards, the labor objections to the Thomas-Lesinski bill must be removed. The Executive Council hopes and anticipates that Congress will adopt the measure in the single form. Then the President will sign it, which organized labor can go."

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Mr. Green also said he had dispatched a telegram to Secretary of State Dean Acheson, on behalf of the council, urging United States aid for a group of anti-Soviet Russian refugees now living in Shanghai who have been ordered by Soviet agents.

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BLS Consumers' Price Index Up Slightly; Increases in Food, Rent Cause New Rise

Washington.—Consumers in large cities gave slightly higher prices for goods and services during the month ending April 16, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Higher food prices and rent increases more than offset other price declines to push the BLS consumer price index up by .1 percent during the month, the bureau said.

On April 15 the index was 169.3 percent of the 1935-39 average, 1 percent higher than a year ago, 27.2 percent above June 1946, and 72.3 percent over the August 1939 level.

Retail food prices over the nation increased by an average of 6 percent with fluctuations reported in several of the cities included in the survey. Prices advanced in 17 cities, declined in 17 cities, and were unchanged in 2. The retail food price index stood at 202.8 percent of the 1935-39 average, but was 2.8 percent below the level of a year ago.

The over-all rise in the food price index resulted primarily from higher prices for eggs, meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, the BLS report said. Declines were reported in sets of apparel, mostly for fifth consecutive month, and 7 percent lower than mid-April than in mid-March and 4.5 percent below October 1948 when apparel prices started their downward trend. Prices of men work clothing decreased in practically all cities surveyed in April. Higher prices were also reported for men's business shirts; boys' shorts and waist sets; women's spring coats and suits, cotton dresses and hand dresses, and nylon hose; and girls' cotton dresses, slips and better quality hose. Price declines were also reported for both cotton and rayon yard goods.

Residential rents advanced .2 percent from mid-March to mid-April and .5 percent over the 3-month period, the BLS said. Higher rents were reported in 10 of the cities surveyed in both March and April, with increases ranging from .1 percent in Manchester, New Hampshire, Ohio, to 1 percent in New York over the quarter-to-quarter period between Marchmid and April.

Substantial decreases in retail prices for gasoline, kerosene, fuel oil and fuel oils were mainly responsible for the drop of .1 percent in the index for electricity and refrigeration in the period March 15 to April 15, the Household furnishings also showed a slight decline, the BLS report said. The average for sets of apparel, mostly for fifth consecutive month, were 7 percent lower than mid-April than in mid-March and 4.5 percent below October 1948 when apparel prices started their downward trend. Prices of men work clothing decreased in practically all cities surveyed in April. Higher prices were also reported for men's business shirts; boys' shorts and waist sets; women's spring coats and suits, cotton dresses and hand dresses, and nylon hose; and girls' cotton dresses, slips and better quality hose. Price declines were also reported for both cotton and rayon yard goods.

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AFL Unions, Tennessee Valley Authority Praised For Conduct of Labor Relations

Washington.—A group of AFL unions and the Tennessee Valley Authority were praised by the House Congress' Joint Committee on Labor-Management Relations for the manner in which they have conducted industrial relations over the 15-year life of the TVA.

The final report of the congressional group, prepared by Alexander R. Heron, counsel to the committee, declared:

"The TVA has been in existence over 16 years, and during that period its relations with labor have been relatively free of strife and discord.

"Some of the reasons are:

"1. The board of directors of TVA early decided to follow a policy of recognition as a free account, which made for TVA the employer.

"2. Management has proved by its deeds that it is constantly striving to deal fair and square with labor.

"3. The right of workers to trust and faith in the motives of TVA.

"4. The Tennessee Valley Trades and Labor Council is composed of responsible unions.

"5. The officers of the Tennessee Valley Trades and Labor Council are real labor leaders, men of exceptional ability.

"6. Labor and management both desire to maintain harmonious relations in operation.

"7. TVA keeps the council fully informed of all events that are of interest to labor.

"8. The board of directors, past and present, has given the right attitude to do with labor policy, have on the whole been honest, intelligent and realistic individuals."

NEW YORK STATE REPORTS IMPROVED STRIKE RECORD

Albany, N. Y.—Work stoppages in New York State declined in a loss of less working time during the first quarter of 1949 than during the corresponding period of 1948, Industrial Commissioner Isidore Dollinger announced.

A total of 358,230 man-days, approximately one-tenth of 1 percent of estimated available working time, was lost during the quarter in which 126 strikes occurred. In all, 224,300 workers were involved.

Approximately 259,010 man-days, or 72 percent of available working time, were lost in strikes during March. Two stoppages in New York City, involving 3,700 employes of a bus line and approximately 7,000 railway express workers, accounted for 75 percent of the time lost.

OVER 200,000 APPRENTICES REGISTERED BY LABOR DEPT.

Niagara Falls, N. Y.—A total of 208,337 apprentices are now registered with the Labor Department's Bureau of Apprenticeship or with state apprenticeship agencies, and 6,620 joint management-labor apprenticeship committees are established, Ansel E. Cleary, assistant director of Bureau of Apprenticeship, reported here at an apprentice graduation ceremony.

The ceremony was sponsored by a joint management-labor apprenticeship committees in charge of city-wide programs in which apprentices are being trained for employment in the construction trades.

Mr. Cleary made the remarks on apprentices and joint committees, Mr. Cleary said that 29,970 of the total number of apprentices throughout the country are registered in New York State.

Emphasizing the importance of maintaining the skilled labor force through apprentice training, Mr. Cleary pointed to the experience of Germany after the war, and how they dire need for craftsmen in "the battle for production." Referring to the Selective Service System, he declared that "there is a need for more rounded division of manpower between the civilian production forces and the military forces."

CATHOLIC UNIONISTS URGED TO BACK TAFT ACT REPEAL

New York.—Ralph Wright, assistant secretary of labor, urged members of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists to back the repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act because its philosophy was "in direct conflict" with 2 papal encyclicals.

The encyclicals, he said, were "The Condition of Labor," issued by Leo XIII in 1891 and "The Reconstruction of the Social Order," issued by Pius XI in 1931.

Another speaker at the annual communion breakfast here was Joseph D. Keenan, director of Labor's League for Political Education of the American Federation of Labor.

Unemployment Benefit Payments Dip, Jobless Number About 1,000,000 Over '48

Washington.—Robert C. Goodwin, director of the Bureau of Employment Security, reported a $52,000,000 decline in unemployment insurance benefit payments to workers covered by state agencies.

However, the total of claims figures for the week to May 14 indicated that unemployment among covered workers was almost 1,000,000 ahead of the corresponding week of last year, Mr. Goodwin said.

The statistics for March and April often indicate that claimants are filing for relatively longer periods than was the case a year previously.

"This is evidenced by the fact that, during April, the percent of total unemployed claimed filing claims as compared to the preceding month dropped filing claims in April of the previous year was made from 47 to 43 percent.

"And the most recent figures showed the initial claims indicating some slackening in the rate of declined slightly from the previous week. Initial claims for unemployment claims had increased by 41,200, most of the increase occurring in Rhode Island and Illinois.

Initial claims for the week to May 14 were 344,255, compared with a total of 351,292 for the previous week. Continued claims numbered 2,025,000. Altogether, 23 states reported declines in initial claims.

Benefits to unemployed workers covered by state unemployment insurance laws in April amounted to $126,-282,000, compared with $182,254,000 the preceding month. The average weekly number of beneficiaries in April was 1,505,000, a decline of 149,000 from March. The average weekly payment for each claimant was $20.67, about the same as the average in March.

The largest decline in initial claims in the week ending May 14 was reported in California. Michigan reported the largest increase in initial claims, 16,000.

STATE COUNCIL FOR FEPC TO CONTINUE CAMPAIGN

Philadelphia.—The State Council for a Pennsylvania FEPC will continue its work for fair employment practices legislation until an adequate bill is placed on the Pennsylvania statute books. The announcement was made here by Arthur Ziegler, Jr., chairman of the state council, following a meeting of the group.

"During the recent legislative session, the Republican Party in power were not kept; citizen efforts to enact FEPC were thwarted," Mr. Pickett said. "There is one fact which the citizens of Pennsylvania must realize. The general assembly during the last session did not simply neglect to pass a law. A real decision was made—the decision to allow discriminatory practices to continue in Pennsylvania for two more years."

The state council is composed of 40 state-wide and local civic, labor, fraternal, religious and veterans organizations.

Weekly Earnings In Sharp Decline

Washington.—The purchasing power of the nation's factory workers declined 2 percent during 1948-1949 during the month ending in mid-March, according to reports on average weekly earnings released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The bureau said that the 12,100,000 factory workers suffered a reduction in weekly earnings from $53.63 to $52.56 in the BLS study.

Chief reason for the decline, the reports said, is the continued reduction in the length of the workweek which, in the 12 months, shrank 2 hours below the level of a year ago.

The BLS said that the average factory payroll envelope contained $4.84 less than a year ago, but that the record level of $58.01 reached last December was still high.

Hit hardest were workers in the automobile industry, where parts, particularly in textile, leather and apparel plants, which have been hard hit, dropped $2 and more in a month's period. Average hourly earnings and substantially lower rates of activity.

In the durable goods field, the decline is 7-cent rise in gross hourly earnings from a year, while gross weekly earnings have retreated to the April 1948 level, the BLS declared.

APPRENTICESHIP UNITS GIVEN NEW RECOGNITION

Washington.—Official recognition has been given to five national joint management-labor apprenticeship committees in the building trades by Secretary of Labor Maurice J. Tobin. He has appointed them as the policy-determining agency in the Bureau of Apprenticeship on all matters relating to standards of training, electrical, painting and decorating, sheet metal work, bricklaying, and stonemason work.

It is anticipated that the majority of the other national trade apprenticeship committees which have been established to date will request this same recognition in the present time national joint apprenticeship committees now exist in 15 skilled trades, including the 5 mentioned.

TOTAL OF PUBLIC WORKERS ESTIMATED AT 6 MILLION

Chicago.—Nearly 4,000,000 persons are on state and local government payrolls, the Civil Service Assembly reported.

With 2,089,000 working for the federal government the nation's total number of government employes exceeded 6,000,000 in January, the assembly said. The all-time high was 6,604,000 in January 1949.

On Site Labor Cost Averaged One-Third Of Total Home Construction in 1946-47

Washington.—Carpenters, masons, plumbers, electricians and other workers at the site accounted for about a third of total house construction costs in 1946-47. This is revealed in an article appearing in the May issue of the Monthly Labor Review, official publication of the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The proportion of costs chargeable to site labor was reported to be about the same as in 1941-42.

According to the article, the ratio of site payroll to total construction cost was highest on the least expensive projects, and tended to decline as the average construction cost increased. For the one-family houses studied, payrolls constituted 40.7 percent of costs for units averaging under $5,000, compared with 22.5 percent in the cost class between $5,000 and $10,000, and 20.7 percent for the houses costing $10,000 and over.

As would be expected, the number of man-hours required to build the average house increased with the size and cost of the structure. Single-family houses costing less than $5,000, with an average of 753 square feet in floor area, required 1,150 man-hours for construction. For dwellings costing over $10,000, the average was 2,685 square feet and man-hours averaged 2,190 hours.

Average hourly earnings, according to the article, do not appear to be related to either size of operations or unit construction costs, but reflect primarily regional differences in wage rates. Earnings averaged $1.34 per hour on the southern projects included in the study, $1.68 on the housing built in northern and western cities.

AFL TEAMSTERS' LOCAL GAINS $10 PAY INCREASE

Newark, N. J.—Six New Jersey breweries and an AFL teamsters local signed a new contract providing for outside arbitration when workers complain of speedups.

The pact maintains the present 40-hour week and provides wage boosts of $1 per week, retroactive to April 1.